A Guide to How Data Improves Student Achievement

New Hampshire Department of Education

Providing New Hampshire students with a quality education doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of knowing the strengths of our education system, addressing our weaknesses and measuring our progress—school by school and student by student.

Data tools play a significant role in making us aware of school performance. They provide our schools with accurate ways to gauge and evaluate student achievement. Data tools ensure that parents, students, educators and school administrators are provided with quality data and information at all grade levels from kindergarten through high school.

Obtaining and sharing school performance data is important for everyone in our community. Educators need regular information about which classroom strategies are succeeding, how well standards are being met and which students are struggling. Parents and students need to know if students are making progress and learning the skills they need to be successful. Cities and towns need to know which schools most need additional resources. Schools cannot meet higher academic expectations without information that enables them to know how well they are performing.

New Hampshire's Commitment to Authentic Accountability and Improvement

Now more than ever, schools in New Hampshire are being held accountable for the quality of education they provide to students. Our focus on accountability aims to ensure that all children have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education.

How can we decide if school performance is good enough? Data tools help us find the answer to this question. Gathering and sharing data on the results of educational programs is essential to help students meet high academic standards. At the local level, for example, data helps administrators decide which programs need improvement, more or less funding, or other changes.

The New Hampshire Board of Education, with the support of the Department of Education, is well on the way to reconciling the measures promoted by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act with our own state's rigorous indicators of student and school success. The New Hampshire-grown system of school recognition is being built to include information about individual school progress each year, evidence of student learning through complex demonstrations of competency and customer satisfaction. In order to complement these statewide measures, local communities contribute their own indicators to complete the picture of what our schools should be and do.

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SHARING DATA ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

There are a variety of data tools that you can use to learn about a school's performance. These include:

New Hampshire Department of Education's Web Site

The Department of Education recently introduced a completely revised Web site to meet the needs of parents, educators, state agencies and community members. The new Web site provides a wide range of New Hampshire public school data, including: assessment scores; attendance and enrollment reports; dropout data; and financial reports. You can visit the Department of Education's Web site at *www.ed.state.nh.us*.

New Hampshire School District Profiles

The Department of Education's Web site (*www.ed.state.nh.us*) includes School District Profiles that offer New Hampshire residents access to detailed information about their schools and communities. The School District Profiles provide school district highlights, assessment scores, pupil expenditures and graduation data. This is a tool that helps everyone in the community— parents, students, educators, school board members, business and community leaders—learn more about their schools.

Just for Kids

Just for Kids is a powerful Web tool to help schools identify how they are performing as compared to other schools in the state with similar populations. Just for Kids also helps communities learn what the highest performing schools are doing to achieve academic excellence. The Just for Kids Web site offers reports based on information obtained from the department of education in each state. The reports provide an unbiased, data-based view of a school's academic performance. Just for Kids also offers "best practices" that analyze the district, school and classroom practices that differentiate high-performing schools from average and low-performing schools. You can visit the Just for Kids Web site at www.just4kids.org.

Standard & Poor's Data Partnership

As part of the Data Partnership (see page 3), Standard & Poor's (S&P) developed a Web site that provides student achievement information, financial data and demographic breakdowns for each state's public school system. SchoolMatters.com offers comparison tools, benchmarks and performance indicators designed to help parents, educators, policymakers, and the general public better understand how public schools and school districts are performing. While we fully support this project, we must at the same time make NH residents aware that this online service currently uses some definitions that are not consistent with those used to report data in NH. We are acively working with S&P and expect the adjustments to be made soon. The Web site can be accessed at www.SchoolMatters.com.

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iAnalyze

iAnalyze is a secure Web-based system that hosts assessment results at the state, district, school and student levels. All released assessment items are viewable with their corresponding statistics, along with summary statistics for proficiency levels. Advance filters allow users to disaggregate data by subgroups including Special Education, Title I, English Language Fluency, Reading Recovery and Gender. In addition, the filters allow users to disaggregate data by sub-content areas such as Problem Solving and Reasoning. Data can be exported from the system and also imported into custom fields created by the user. iAnalyze is a key tool for teachers and administrators and provides an efficient way to analyze data at many levels.

ACCOUNTABILITY DATA INITIATIVES

The Department of Education is involved in two data projects that will soon put even more school data in the hands of educators and New Hampshire citizens. The first is the **Initiative for School Empowerment and Excellence (i.4.see)**, a recently launched state project that takes school "best practices" and puts them in the hands of parents, teachers, school administrators and policymakers throughout New Hampshire. Leveraging the experiences of technology savvy schools throughout the country, i.4.see improves the capacity to collect, analyze and distribute the most accurate and useful data available. This data empowers educators with the necessary information to develop the most beneficial educational activities for an entire school or individual students.

For example, the data will enable a teacher to foresee which students in his/her classroom excel in fractions, which students are having difficulty, and then adjust lesson plans to meet each student's needs. State and local administrators will also be able to better analyze school attendance trends, enabling them to identify students who are dropping out and work together to reach out to these individuals. Parents and the public will also have access to additional information that gives them the opportunity to better understand teacher qualifications at their school or student performance gains. i.4.see will be rolled out over the next few years. With a focus on empowering school teachers, this initiative will also improve the ability of the state and legislators to make better policy decisions.

The second data project is the **Education Data Partnership**, a collaboration among the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), S&P's School Evaluation Services, Achieve, Inc, and the CELT Corp. to help state and education leaders better understand and utilize education data in making policy decisions. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Broad Foundation, the Data Partnership provides technical assistance to states using and building systems for educational data. Additional information on the Data Partnership is available at www.SchoolMatters.com.

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SYSTEMS TO COLLECT AND MANAGE DATA

New Hampshire uses a variety of tools to help gather and manage important public school data. These include:

Pupil Identification System

The pupil identification system will help school districts more easily and accurately gather student data that is required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Currently being piloted, the pupil identification system will provide the state's public school system with important benefits. These include improving the quality and reliability of statewide data on public education; reducing the number of student dropouts that slip through the education system; decreasing the time investment and expense of reporting statewide performance data; and reducing the time and expense of preparing test booklets for statewide assessment. The pupil identification system will also enable the state, school districts and individual schools to perform gains-based analysis to help ensure that all students receive a high-quality education.

Education Statistics System (ESS)

Schools and school districts are asked to submit data to the Department of Education through-out the year such as the number of students in each grade and attendance information. The Department developed ESS to enable districts and schools to submit this data over the Internet, providing a rapid and secure method of exchanging data and information. In addition, the Department is currently enhancing this system to enable schools to submit student-level data for each student. The Department can then leverage this data to connect to other internal systems and provide enhanced data back to teachers and schools in a more timely manner.

Education Information System (EIS)

There are more than 15,000 educators teaching in New Hampshire schools and many more educators who are licensed or obtaining their license to teach. EIS is a new Internet-based certification system currently under development that will manage educator licenses, track teacher assignment data and ensure that we have the right teachers in the right classrooms. This system will improve the process a person must go through to apply for their teacher license. For example, rather than waiting an extended period to have an application reviewed by a Department of Education staff member, the new system will allow a student who completes an approved education program in New Hampshire to apply online. An institute of higher education will also be able to endorse that student online, and once the student passes his/her teacher test(s), the license will automatically be issued. The system will help to recruit educators and link educators with job openings throughout New Hampshire. Additionally, this system will allow the state, schools and citizens to understand the qualifications of the teachers within our schools. This system should be completed by the summer of 2005.

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Special Education Information System (SPEDIS) Database

Originating in 1975, the database was developed to monitor the implementation of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act through the identification of handicapped children throughout the state and the services they receive. The project was responsible for the design of the system, data collection forms and training. In 1982, the entire SPEDIS database system was rewritten. The primary advantages were: interactive access by all users to speed up the data entry process, improved online data checking to provide users with immediate error alerts to improve the data quality, more available reports, and access to the system 24 hours-a-day. The state and school districts could now monitor their data in much more detail. In May 2003, the Bureau of Special Education issued a request for proposal (RFP) to replace SPEDIS with a new Web-based special education data collection software and reporting system that includes NCLB requirements. The contract for the project is being reviewed by the attorney general's office to be followed by a review from the Governor and Executive Council. The goal is to have six pilot-sites operational with the new software installed and running by May 2005.

DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS

All of us must use school performance data to continuously improve the education system in our state. Making this data available to the public is essential. Providing every New Hampshire child with a quality education is the result of assessing and understanding the situation, working together in our communities, in the classroom and in our own homes to make a difference.

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DATA TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Two guiding initiatives are creating a series of data tools that will put valuable information in the hands of all New Hampshire residents. i.4.see is a state-level initiative, while the Data Partnership is a federal initiative.

Initiative for School Empowerment & Excellence (i.4.see)
The Data Partnership

If you are a parent, educator, policymaker or simply an interested member of our community, here is a guide to the data tools you can use to learn more about New Hampshire school performance. Many of the same tools can be used by parents, educators and policymakers. For example, Just for Kids enables parents to compare schools in their district, while allowing educators to learn about effective program improvements. Just for Kids also informs policymakers about local and statewide spending decisions. A second example is that i.4.see will soon provide parents with another tool to better evaluate teacher qualifications as well as school and student performance gains. i.4.see will help teachers develop the most beneficial educational activities and enable school administrators to better analyze trends. Additionally, i.4.see will provide policymakers with data needed to make effective decisions.

Parents	Educators	Policymakers
Tools to Access Data		
NH Department of Education's Web Site (available now)	NH Department of Education's Web Site	NH Department of Education's Web Site
NH School District Profiles (available now)	NH School District Profiles	NH School District Profiles
Just for Kids (available now)	Just for Kids	Just for Kids
Standard and Poor's Data Partnership Database (available now)	Standard and Poor's Data Partnership Database	Standard and Poor's Data Partnership Database
Initiative for School Empowerment and Excellence (available winter 2005)	Initiative for School Empowerment and Excellence	Initiative for School Empowerment and Excellence
	iAnalyze (available now)	
	Tools to Manage Data	
	Education Statistics System (available now)	
	Pupil Identification System (currently being piloted)	
	Special Education Information System Database (undergoing enhancements)	
	Education Information System (available summer 2005)	

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